

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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year, nor indeed when on the point of death," as Acosta says in the eighth chapter of his work: *De procuranda Indorum Salute*. Nor did the exhortations and comminations of the famous councils at Lima procure the Indians permission to partake of the eucharist, as appears from the complaints and decrees of the synods held in the next century at Lima, Plata, Arequipa, Paza, and Paraguay. For the priests, who denied the eucharist, always alleged the stupidity, ignorance, and inveterate wickedness of the Indians in their excuse. But the synod held at Paza in the year 1638, was of opinion that this ignorance of the Indians should be ascribed to the negligence of their pastors, by whose sedulous instruction these wretches might have emerged from the native darkness of their minds, and from the slough of wickedness.

Taught by the experience of eighteen years 797
spent amongst the Guaranies, and Abipones, 1/53
I profess to hold the same opinion, having myself seen most barbarous savages born in the woods, accustomed from their earliest age to superstition, slaughter, and rapine, and naturally dull and stupid as brutes, who, after their removal to the colonies of the Jesuits, by daily instruction and by the example of old converts, became well acquainted with and attached

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● 797 to the divine law. Although the Americans are
but slow of understanding, yet when the good
sense of the teacher compensates for the stupidity
of his pupils, they are successfully converted
to civilization and piety, and even instructed
in arts of all kinds. If you wish to see, with
your own eyes, to what a degree instruction
sharpens the wits of the Indians, and enlarges
their comprehensions, go and visit the Guarany
towns; in all of which you will find Indians
well skilled in the making and handling of
musical instruments, in painting, sculpture,
cabinet-making, working metals of every kind,
weaving, architecture, and writing; and some
who can construct clocks, bells, gold clasps,
&c. according to all the rules of art. Moreover,
there were many who printed books, even of
a large size, not only in their native tongue,
but in the Latin language, with brass types,
which they made themselves. They also write
books with a pen so artfully, that the most
discerning European would swear they were
printed. The Bishops, Governours, and other
visitants, were astonished at the workmanship
of the Indians, which they saw or heard of in
the Guarany towns. The Guaranies were
instructed in music, and other arts, by the
Jesuit Missionaries, Italians, Flemings, and
Germans, who found the Indians docile beyond
their expectation.

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 756 could never bring myself to credit it, always
 remaining of opinion that they neither know,
 nor are capable of performing any thing above
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 756 human powers. Being firmly persuaded that
 797 they would do me all the evil in their power,
 I often accosted them in a friendly manner,
 and by all sorts of good offices endeavoured
 to prevail upon them to alter their manner of
 life, and embrace religion; for by their example
 almost all the rest would regulate their con-
 duct. But this was like washing the blacka-
 moor white: for these wickedest of mortals,
 unwilling to part with their authority and lu-
 crative office, left no stone unturned, no frauds
 unattempted to deter and intimidate their
 countrymen from going to church, attending
 to the instructions of the priests, and receiving
 baptism, daily denouncing death, and destruc-
 tion on the whole nation, unless they obeyed.
 Nor is this either new or surprizing. In all
 the American nations the teachers of the holy
 religion have found the jugglers upholders of
 ancient superstition, and rocks in the way of
 the desired progress of the Christian law.
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 756 Good heavens! what contests, and what trou-
 797 ble did they not cause to Antonio Ruiz de Mon-
 toya, the famous Guarany missionary! It was
 not till he had repressed the authority of the
 remaining jugglers, and commanded the bones of

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

81

the dead ones, which were universally worshipped with great honours, to be burnt in the presence of the people, that he converted an infinite number of savages to the Christian religion, and induced them to enter colonies. Till these knavish *holophants*, and sycophants to speak with Plautus, are abolished, nothing can be done with the savages; this I affirm on experience. The town of St. Joachim not only merited the praise of religion, but produced many fruits of genuine piety. But as snakes often lurk in the grass, and tares in the most abundant harvest, an old Indian secretly performed the office of juggler there, and suffered himself to be adored as a divine person by some foolish women, whom he served in the double capacity of physician, and prophet, at the same time carrying on a criminal intercourse with them. These things were disclosed to me by Ignatius Paranderi, chief Cacique of the town; so that judging it advisable immediately to reprove this mischievous old man in public, since private admonitions were of no avail, I repaired to his house attended by all the chief people of the place; and imitating, in this important business, the thundering tongue of Cicero when he fulminated against Catiline, addressed him in the following manner. "How long, accursed old man, will you

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756 belie your profession of Christianity, by daring
● 797 to corrupt the morals of your fellow-horde-
men with nefarious arts, and indecent conduct?
After living near twenty years in the school
of Christ, are you not afraid to practise savage
rites the most repugnant to Christian laws?
Your manner of life is exactly suitable to the
name of tiger, (he was called Yaguaretè, which
means a tiger;) for by your deceits and in-
decencies you tear the poor little sheep of
Christ. Extreme age has conducted you to the
goal of life;—unless you repent, what a
wretched death, and when dead what a sad
fate awaits you! I am equally ashamed and
grieved on your account. He whom you be-
hold dead on the cross for you,” said I, showing
him a crucifix, “will drive you headlong into
hell, to punish your perfidy. Be what you
appear, or appear what you are. Regulate your
conduct according to divine law. But if
savage superstitions are too firmly rooted in
your breast to be ever eradicated, return in-
stantly to the woods of the savages, to the dens
of wild beasts where you first saw the light,
that your example may not pervert the rest of
your hordeamen, who have dedicated their
lives to religion and virtue. Go, and repent of
your former sins, and by penitence and inno-
cence of life, cleanse away the stains of them.

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

83

If you do not instantly obey my friendly admonitions, it will be worse for you. Henceforward, you shall not go unpunished. Know, that as soon as ever I hear of any act of superstition or indocency committed or attempted by you, at my orders you shall be led about the streets amidst the hisses of the people, and pelted with cow-dung, by a crowd of boys. Such is my firm determination. This is the thyme and frankincense that shall be offered up to the stinking divinity, which you have madly dared to arrogate to yourself and suffered to be adored." This commination left the old fellow alarmed, and, if I mistake not, corrected, all good men highly approving the severity of my speech. No suspicions were ever after entertained of him, though I inspected all things with a vigilant eye and an attentive ear.

As the jugglers perform the offices not only of soothsayers and physicians, but also of priests of the ceremonies of superstition, it exceeds belief what absurd opinions they inculcate into the ignorant minds of the Abipones. Out of many, I will mention a few. The Abipones think that none of their nation would ever die, were the Spaniards and the jugglers banished from America; for they attribute every one's death, from whatever cause it may proceed,

847 of the infanticide mothers. We, who have grown old amongst the Abipones, should pronounce her a singularly good woman who brings up two or three sons. But the whole Abiponian nation contains so few such mothers, that their names might all be inscribed on a ring. I have known some who killed all the children they bore, no one either preventing or avenging these murders. Such is the impunity with which crimes are committed when they become common, as if custom could excuse their impiety. The mothers bewail their children, who die of a disease, with sincere tears; yet they dash their new-born babes against the ground, or destroy them in some other way, with calm countenances. Europeans will scarce believe that such affection for their dead children can co-exist with such cruelty towards them while they are alive, but to us it is certain and indubitable. After our instructions, however, had engrafted a reverence for the divine law in the minds of the Abipones, the barbarity of the mothers gradually disappeared, and husbands, with joyful eyes, beheld their hands no longer stained with the blood of their offspring, but their arms laden with those dear pledges. These are the fruits and the triumphs of religion, which fills not only Heaven but earth with inhabitants. When polygamy and di-

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HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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force, the iniquitous murdering of infants, and ¹⁷⁷
the liberty of spontaneous abortion were at ⁸⁴⁷
length, by means of Christian discipline, abo- ⁷⁹⁷
lished, the nation of the Abipones, within a
few years, rejoiced to see itself enriched with
incredible accessions of both sexes.

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181 retreats, and think themselves richer in being
foes than friends to the Spaniards. For, as I
have often heard them complain, they found war
with the Christians more to their advantage than
peace. In times of declared enmity, they acquir-
ed by arms what, when peace was established,
they failed of obtaining by prayers. The most
eloquent teacher of God's word will do but
little good in Paraguay, unless he be liberal
in clothing and feeding his disciples. Should
an angel descend from Heaven to make the
Abipones acquainted with God and his com-
mandments, if he should come empty hand-
ed, unprovided with clothes, food, and other
gifts, it would be all in vain, he would scarce
obtain a hearing. Were the blackest demon to
come up from hell, and offer them chests full
of clothes, food, knives, scissars, rings, and
glass-beads, he would be called captain, and
find all the Abipones tractable and obedient.
If you ask me why the Americans have not all
been induced to embrace Christianity, I will
tell you the reason. It is chiefly owing to the
pernicious examples of the old Christians, and
to their want of liberality to the Indians; the
former deter them from embracing our reli-
gion, while the latter renders them apostates
797 to it. Another cause is to be found in the

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

135

extreme, and almost incredible scarcity of 797
priests to instruct them, and indeed of all
things. After perusing the latter part of my
history, you will perhaps be better inclined to
credit what I say.

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

141

the Spaniards forcibly wrested from their ancestors, and which, in their opinion, they at this day unjustly usurp. To eradicate these errors, we all ardently strove to instil into their ferocious minds an affection and friendship for the Spaniards; but our efforts were not crowned with success. Although they burnt with hereditary hatred to the Spaniards, yet, in their very manner of killing them, they displayed a sort of humanity. They inflicted death, but thought it unworthy of them, after the mortal blow, to torture, excruciate, tear, and mangle them, like other savages; though they were wonderfully solicitous about cutting off their heads, by displaying which they thought to testify their valour to their countrymen at home. They generally spared the unwarlike, and carried away innocent boys and girls unhurt. They used to feed infants, torn from their mothers' breasts, with the juice of fruits and herbs, during a long journey, and carried them home uninjured. If ever mothers, or their children, were slain, it was done by youths thirsting for the blood of the Spaniards, or by grown men enraged at the deaths of their countrymen whom the Spaniards had slain.

The Spaniards, Indians, Negroes, or Mulattoes, taken by them in war, they do not ill-use like captives, but treat with kindness, and in-

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

153

away his wife, or to marry more than one. For 795
this reason they are extremely anxious to have 562
themselves and their husbands baptized, that
they may be rendered more certain of the per-
petuity of their marriage. This must be un-
derstood only of the younger women; for the
old ones, who are obstinate adherers to their an-
cient superstitions, and priestesses of the savage
rites, strongly oppose the Christian religion, fore-
seeing that if it were embraced by the whole Abi-
ponian nation, they should lose their authority,
and become the scorn and the derision of all.
The young men amongst the Abipones, as well 181
as the old women, greatly withstood the pro- 797
gress of religion; for, burning with the desire of
military glory and of booty, they are excessively
fond of cutting off the heads of the Spaniards,
and plundering their waggons and estates, which
they know to be forbidden by the law of God.
Hence, they had rather adhere to the institutes
of their ancestors, and traverse the country on
swift horses, than listen to the words of a priest
within the walls of a church. If it depended
upon the old men and the young women alone,
the whole nation would long since have em-
braced our religion.

Honourable mention has been frequently made 562
by me of the chastity of the Abiponian women: 894

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

165

to the market-place, not merely to look on, but to give assistance as they shall think proper. Some defend the one, some the other. The duel soon becomes a battle-royal. They fly at each other's breasts with their teeth like tigers, and often give them bloody bites. They lacerate one another's cheeks with their nails, rend their hair with their hands, and tear the hole of the flap of the ear, into which the roll of palm-leaves is inserted. Though a husband sees his wife, and a father his daughter, bathed in blood and covered with wounds, yet they look on at a distance, with motionless feet, silent tongues, and calm eyes; they applaud their Amazons, laugh, and wonder to see such anger in the souls of women, but would think it beneath a man to take any part in these female battles. If there appears no hope of the restoration of peace, they go to the Father: "See!" say they, "our women are out of their senses again to-day. Go, and frighten them away with a musket." Alarmed at the noise, and even at the sight of this, they hasten back to their tents, but even from thence, with a Stentorian voice, repeat the word which had been the occasion of the combat, and, neither liking to seem conquered, return again and again to the market-place, and renew the fight. It seems to have been a regu-

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- 192* acquainted with the language, catch hold of to
 193* make themselves understood. It means that
 which is the instrument, means, or part of per-
 forming any thing. This shall be elucidated by
 examples. The Abipones constantly chew to-
 *192 bacco leaves mixed with salt, and the saliva of
 *193 old women, calling it medicine. They come at
 276 all hours, and say, *Tach kaúe Pay npeeték yoetá :*
 ● 777 Father, give me tobacco leaves, my medicine.
 Having obtained this, they presently add, *Tach*
kaúe achibiraik noetá land: Give me also salt.
 which serves to compose this medicine. Another
 comes and says: *Tachkaúe latañan lpahè land:*
 Give me a knife to cut my meat with, or *Tach-*
kaúe kéepe yéeeriki land: Give me an axe to build
 192* my house with. Persons better acquainted
 193* with the language generally abstain from the
 use of this word *land*, in place of which they
 make noun substantives of verbs, by which the
 instrument or means of doing a thing is ad-
 mirably expressed. Thus, *Noetarèn*, I am
 healed. *Noetarenátanrât*, medicine. *Noeta-*
ranatañrankatè, a medical instrument. *Hakirio-*
gran, I plough. *Kiriogrankatè*, a plough. *Na-*
hategñan, I shear. *Ahategkatè*, scissors, or snuf-
 fers, which, as it were, shear the wick. *Géhayà*,
 I behold. *Geharlatè*, a looking-glass. *Rietachà*,
 I fear. *Netachkatñanrât*, an instrument of ter-
 ror. They facetiously call remarkably ugly

*192 *Ndžè!* (which they usually say when astonished
576 at any sudden novelty,) and *Tayretà!* Oh! the
poor little thing!

● 797 But these examples are sufficient to show
you the asperities, difficulties, and strange
construction of the Abiponian tongue. Were
I to embrace every thing necessary to the
thorough understanding of it, I should fill a
volume. Father Joseph Brigniel, the first civi-
lizer of that nation, was also the first to turn his
attention towards learning, and afterwards ex-
plaining this language. He translated the chief
heads of religion, and the regular church
prayers, into the Abiponian tongue, for the use
of the whole nation. It is incredible what
pains he took in this study; and his patience,
and the retentiveness of his memory, were ab-
solutely iron. Though he spoke Latin, Ger-
man, French, Italian, and Spanish, as well as
the language of the Guaranies, whose apostle
he had formerly been, with elegance and flu-
ency, being well versed in six different lan-
guages, yet he found it a difficulty to gain even
a smattering of the Abiponian tongue. He left
no stone unturned to fish out the names of
things, and the inflexions, and force of the
words. But though he was extremely eager to
obtain a knowledge of the language, and spared
no pains in the pursuit, masters and books were
both wanting.

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

201

both wanting. There were, indeed, Spaniards 727
 who, having been taken captives by the Abi-
 pones in their boyhood, had learnt the Abipo-
 nian tongue, but they had generally forgotten
 the language of their own country; while those
 who fell in captivity amongst the savages, after
 they had grown up, had learnt their language
 so ill that they scarce spoke a word without
 blundering. By degrees they forget their own
 language, but are incapable of properly ac-
 quiring any other. The same may be said in [153]
 regard to the Abipones, who have returned to
 their own people after being for some time cap-
 tives amongst the Spaniards. You will, there-
 fore, sooner learn to err than to speak from the
 captives. But if we were able to hire any one 114
 of them to instruct us who was tolerably well 797
 acquainted with both languages, Good hea-
 vens! what troubles had we not to undergo!
 When asked what the Abipones called such
 or such a thing, he would reply in so low and
 dubious a tone, that we were not able to
 distinguish a syllable, or even a letter. If we
 asked him to repeat the same word two or three
 times over, he grew angry, and would not speak.
 Scarce was the hour of instruction ended, when
 he required the reward for the few words he
 has pronounced: one day a knife; the next a
 pair of scissars; the next glass-beads; the next

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114 something of more value. If we denied him
1797 what he asked, he would never visit us again;
if we gave it, he was daily emboldened to ask
things of still more value. Great is the misery
of the scholar when masters are either scarce or
too dear. I do not deny that, by daily conver-
sation with the Indians, I learnt the names of
those things which are present to the eyes;
but invisible things, which relate to God and
the soul, can only be learnt by conjecture and
very long use. When horses, tigers, or arms,
are talked of, you will find any of the Abipones
a Demosthenes or a Tully: if the question turn
on the affections and functions of the mind, and
the practice of virtue, they will either give you
answers darker than night, or remain silent.

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177 When we were studying the Guarany tongue,
grammars and three dictionaries were published
by Fathers Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, and
Paulo Restivo, a Sicilian, which saved us a
great deal of time and labour. By their assist-
ance our progress was so much accelerated
that, at the end of three months, we were per-
mitted to confess the Guaranies by order of
four of the older Jesuits, who, at the command
of the superiors, closely examined our know-
ledge in the language. But as the assistance
A
114 of books was wanting amongst the Abipones,
1797 Joseph Brigniel made up for the deficiency by

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

203.

all possible arts and industry. If any new word or elegance could be gathered from the conversation of the savages, he carefully wrote it down, and at length composed a dictionary, which, in course of time, grew to a hundred and fifty sheets. It was afterwards copied out, corrected, and considerably enriched by members of our society. It is easy to add to what is begun; for the successors, sitting on the shoulders of those that preceded them, see farther, and more than they. Pizarro penetrated into Peru, and Cortez into Mexico, but not till Columbus, who first saw America, had shown them the way. The Jesuit Brigniel first discovered the track to be pursued amid the dim shades of a savage language, made himself a guide to the rest, and, to express myself in few words, merits eternal fame for having kindled a light amidst darkness, by pointing out the rude lineaments of grammar rules.

The Abiponian language is involved in new difficulties by a ridiculous custom which the savages have of continually abolishing words common to the whole nation, and substituting new ones in their stead. Funeral rites are the origin of this custom. The Abipones do not like that any thing should remain to remind them of the dead. Hence appellative words bearing any affinity with the names of the de-

586 injuries is refreshed in the minds of the intoxicated guests, the relations fiercely avenge the dishonour done to the repudiated wife. Often, [587] too, women just cast off by one man are immediately married by another. I have observed [797] elsewhere that the younger women highly approve the law of Christ, and are anxious that themselves and their husbands should be baptized, because the perpetuity of their marriage is thereby secured, and their husbands prevented from changing or increasing the number (182) of their wives. This licence of divorce produces, as I have already related, bloody murders [847] of children, and the incredible diminution of the whole nation.

582 You will find many things worthy of reprehension, but at the same time not a few deserving of praise, in the married state of the Abipones. I will inform you of those most worthy of mention.

[795] Though the paternal indulgence of the Roman pontiffs makes the first and second degrees of relationship alone a bar to the marriage of the Indians, yet the Abipones, instructed by nature and the example of their ancestors, abhor the very thought of marrying any one related to them by the most distant tie of relationship. Long experience has convinced me, that the respect to consanguinity, by which they are deterred from marrying into their own families,

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622 being herself thrown, affords an amusing spectacle to the assembled people. During the remaining days, (for those games last eight days,) either the former sports are renewed, or the men joyfully indulge in public drinking-parties, wherein songs are alternately sung to the sound of drum. Of the other games, [527] on the occasion of some person's being admitted to the rank of captain, of the celebration of any signal victory, of the death of a noble, the removal of the bones of the dead, the shaving of a widow's hair, &c. we shall discourse elsewhere. Of this I am quite certain, that [184] the Abipones Nakaiketergehes, or wood-Abipones, are much more observant of national rites and ceremonies than the rest. It is incredible what time and labour it cost us to abolish the national rites of this ferocious nation, which the example of their ancestors had hallowed in their eyes. An oak a hundred years old, which has stuck its roots deep into the ground, is not felled at a blow. But now, from nuptial and natal games, let us proceed to things of a more gloomy character, to diseases, physicians, and medicines.

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HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

227

discover which of the jugglers it was that had⁷⁵⁴ afflicted him with this sickness, was his daily and nightly endeavour. On this affair he consulted some old women, who pronounced a Toba, of the name of Napakainchin, to be the cause of the disease. The sick man immediately devotes the accused to death, for the⁷⁵⁴ preservation, as he thought, of his own life. ⁶⁸³ In the dead of the night, he came upon him unawares, as he was sleeping in his tent; he plunged the iron point of his spear into his body, pierced his left side with a powerful blow, broke two of his ribs, and clove his shoulder with a weapon. At the cries of the wounded man, people assembled, whilst the assassin escaped by flight. We were called to the assistance of the poor wretch. ⁷⁹⁷ Seeing him ⁶⁸³ bathed in blood, and pierced with three wounds, ⁷⁵⁴ we imagined that he would expire immediately. The bystanders told us that unless we removed him into our house, the person who put him in this condition would return to dispatch him with fresh wounds. According to their advice, he was conveyed into our house. Slipping by the way out of the hands of the carriers, he fell to the ground with fresh, and imminent danger of his life; for he was very large, and of weight proportionable to such great bulk. The place where he was laid in our house, as it had

797 neither door nor fastening, was fortified by the
 683 Abipones with hides on every side, that Ycho-
 754 hake might not gain access, if he came to com-
 plete the murder. And, in fact, as the Indians
 foretold, in half an hour, he came furnished with
 a dagger to hasten the death of the dying man;
 but being bravely repulsed by Father Joseph
 Brigniel, whose companion I then was, returned
 without accomplishing his purpose. The
 wounded man was baptized, and by means of
 our cares and medicines, amongst which hen's
 fat was the principal, happily recovered in the
 course of a few weeks. Napakainchin's wife
 and children gladly imitated his example, and
 embraced the Christian religion. A little after,
 the whole family, apprehending fresh danger
 from the same Ychohake, removed to the neigh-
 bouring town of St. Xavier.

683 Do not imagine the history of the sick
 754 and crazy Ychohake finished. After strug-
 gling with the disease for some months, with
 increased suspicions of some witchcraft being
 practised upon him, he took it into his head to
 accuse a woman, supposed to be acquainted
 with the black art, of his ill state of health.
 About mid-day, he attacked the unsuspecting
 female, and as he endeavoured to strike off her
 head, the weapon glanced aside, and cut her
 left cheek, which, falling to her breast with the

683 ing to the town of St. Ferdinand. Divine Pro-
754 vidence seems to have dictated her flight; for
the Cacique Ychoalay, who was absent from
the town at the time of the event, when in-
formed by me of Ychohake's cruelty, and re-
622 quested to restrain his brother, replied that he
683 should come immediately, not to restrain his
754 brother, but to kill that woman, whom he had
long thought infamous for her magic arts, and to
be feared by all. And indeed, being very firm
in his resolves, he would have put his threats
into execution without a doubt, had he found
the woman in the town. For, in former years,
when they wandered up and down the plains,
he turned out of his horde all women suspected
of sorcery, and pierced many of them, though
perhaps perfectly innocent, with a spear, that
they might never deceive any one again; being
often condemned both on the score of credulity
and cruelty.

797 But this bloody tragedy, at length, had a
happy termination. The Indian Ychohake
ceased at length to live and to be feared, and
you will be surprised to hear that one, who, in
his lifetime, had been so mad in his suspicions
of sorcery, grew sane in his last moments.
Having received baptism, at his own desire,
conscious of approaching dissolution he de-

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

231

lighted much in the presence of the priest, 797 •
whom, as he came in the early part of the night,
he persuaded to repose for a while at his own
house, promising to let him know when he felt
his death approach. He kept his word: he
calmly expired the night before Trinity Sunday,
whilst the priest was suggesting every thing
consolatory to the dying man, and his relations
were all weeping around him. He caused us
to entertain great hopes of his obtaining a
happy immortality on many accounts. For,
indignant at the lamentations of his weeping
domestics, he said they should remember he
was going to visit the great house of the
Creator of all things, the high father, the great-
est captain. Ever intent on appeasing the
Almighty, he testified sorrow and remorse for
the many murders he had committed, of Chris-
tians and others. He repeatedly desired his 764
wife not to follow the custom of their ancestors
in slaying his horses and sheep at his grave;
leaving them, and all his other property, to
his little daughter. All this manifests that he
held his ancient superstitions in abhorrence,
and had embraced Christianity with his whole
soul. I have related this to show you that all 754
the misery resulting from deaths and disorders 756
is attributed by the Abipones to the magical 761

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

245

of Spaniards he had slain. Here it may be ¹⁶⁴ observed that the Americans, who have had the ⁷⁵¹ genuine small-pox, do not fear the return of it. At ~~five~~ years of age I had the small-pox so ⁵⁰⁰ slightly, that I was marked in ten places only, and was ill but two days. Yet that this short sickness is, by the law of nature, sufficient, I was fully persuaded, after living many months, day and night, with Indians who had the disorder, without taking the infection.

Almost the same observations may be made ¹⁶⁴ on measles as on small-pox. It rages at inter-⁷³¹vals, spreads, and cuts off vast numbers in America. Whilst I resided in the town of St. Joachim, out of two thousand Indians so many were laid up with this disorder, that often none were left to supply the sick with food, water, wood and medicines. The offices due to the ^[797] minds and bodies of the sick kept Father Joseph Fleischauer and myself occupied day and night for some months. That pestilence carried off ^[165] two hundred persons, out of which number there were very few infants, and no old men, most of them being persons in the flower of their age. The tertian ague sometimes spreads like a contagion amongst the Indians, but is more troublesome than dangerous, and prevails only in those places where stinking ditch water is in constant use. For the same reason ter-

164 tian ague is very prevalent in many Spanish
 towns, especially in Tucuman. In the colony
 164 of Concepcion, on the banks of the river Ines-
 312 pin, which supplied the inhabitants with sweet
 361 and very wholesome water, no person was ever
 seized with the tertian ague. In the colonies
 of St. Ferdinand and the Rosary, which were
 surrounded with marshes and lakes, the Abi-
 pones were destitute of river water, and conse-
 164 quently hardly ever free from agues. In the
 colony of the Rosary the fever prevailed so
 much for the space of some months, that no
 one escaped it, not even myself, though at
 other times secure amidst persons infected with
 [797] this disorder. That none of the savages might
 die suddenly without receiving baptism, I
 daily visited all the sick, and at length caught
 the quotidian ague, though the Indians only
 laboured under the tertian. The fever daily
 increased at sun-set, and did not leave me till
 morning. This feverish agitation, at the end
 of seven and twenty days, was succeeded by
 the tertian, after two fits of which I happily
 recovered. What I suffered, in my utter want
 of all necessities, and what danger I underwent,
 need not be told here.

600 Just as I am about to conclude my discourse
 on contagious disorders, a circumstance occurs
 to my mind worthy the critical examination of

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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poured forth a volley of curses on his ungrate-
 ful patient. "You had better call up a devil
 from hell, Fathers," said he, "to cure this
 beast. When I offered him medicine, the savage
 tried to kill me: he opposes a lance to a
 syringe. Who could contend with such un-
 equal arms?" The Guaranies have the same
 repugnance to the use of the syringe. The In-
 dians use snuff as a medicine, stuffing it into
 their ears, when they find them badly affected
 by the rain or wind. The jugglers vauntingly
 affirm, that they have it in their power to per-
 form cures by words alone. Sitting on the
 sick man's bed they sing extemporary verses,
 as magical charms, either to reconcile the evil
 spirit, or to call up the shades of the dead by
 whose assistance they hope to remove all dis-
 eases. But away with this superstitious non-
 sense. The Abiponian physicians show how
 little they confide in their own arts, when, on
 being seized with a disorder, they neglect to
 consult their colleagues, and prefer the aid of
 any European who will prescribe for them. At
 the time that I dwelt amongst the Abipones, the
 most famous in the art of medicine was Parie-
 kaikin, the chief of the jugglers, who, on being
 seized with pleurisy, called on me to heal him
 in preference to any of his colleagues. Cal-
 cined hartshorn, boiled in barley-water, re-

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258

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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 756 stored him to health, and gained me the repu-
 797 tation of a physician amongst the Abipones.
 A
 123 Nothing will procure you the good-will of the
 savages so soon as skill in the healing art. They
 think that he who understands the natures and
 remedies of diseases can be ignorant of nothing.
 They will believe him in matters of religion,
 and be tractable and obedient to him. Our
 Saviour himself inspired mortals with wonder,
 by healing bodies as well as souls. In imitation
 of him, when we were employed in the instruc-
 tion of the savages, we endeavoured to supply
 the want of physicians, surgeons, and druggists,
 by easily obtained remedies, by reading medi-
 cal books, and by other means, in order to wean
 that miserable people from their jugglers, whom
 we accounted the chief obstacles to the propa-
 gation of the holy religion.

G
 758 It is incredible how well the sick are taken
 797 care of in the Guarany towns. Indians are ap-
 pointed to attend upon them, more or fewer,
 according to the number of inhabitants. These
 men have some knowledge of herbs and com-
 mon remedies, though they are not allowed to
 use any medicine without consulting the mis-
 sionary. They carry in their hands a staff
 marked with a cross, and are hence called cross-
 bearers. It is their business to go about dawn
 to visit the sick in the district appointed to

797 a day passed that the sick did not ask for one of these things. Three gourds were always in readiness filled with as many ointments: one green, made of suet, and thirty different herbs; the second black; the third yellow. Each of these was destined to a separate purpose. We also had at hand plenty of sanative herbs, and the barks of trees famed for medicinal virtues. Numerous animals, moreover, supply the Americans with medicine. I will mention a few. A cataplasm of crocodiles' fat heals bruises. The stomach of the same when dried, ground to powder, and drank with water, is said to relieve the pain of the stone. The Spaniards and Indians wear a crocodile's tooth suspended from their neck or arm, and believe that it will defend them from the bites of serpents. Persons bitten by serpents scrape some dust from a crocodile's tooth, and drink it mixed with water. The little stones found in the stomach of the crocodile when ground to powder, and drank, alleviate the pains of stone in the kidneys. Calcined tigers' claws, mixed with alum calcined also and reduced to powder, are a potent remedy for the tooth-ache. Tiger's fat instantly expels worms from the head or any other part of the body, if laid on the place where they attempt egress. Common house-flies often creep through the mouth or nose into the heads of

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

269

sleeping persons, and there breed worms thick 797.
in the middle, terminating in a red point at each
end, but white every where else, about as long
as the nail of the little finger, and surrounded
with circles like rings. Within a few hours
they multiply to an incredible degree, and gnaw
that part of the head where they lie. The in-
convenience occasioned by their numbers, or
want of food, obliges them to attempt an exit
wherever it can be effected. A reddish spot on
the surface of the skin is a mark of the intended
eruption. The circumference of this spot
must be anointed with tiger's fat, the detestable
stench of which induces the worms to redouble
their efforts, pierce through the bones and flesh,
and break entirely out. I was astonished to
see more worms than could be contained in my
cap, proceed from the head of an Indian in the
town of St. Joachim. Nor can I understand
how one man's head is capable of receiving or
supporting such a number of maggots. But
from this we may conclude the incredible com-
pression of the worms in so small a space.
They make a passage between the eyebrows,
but so narrow, that only one at a time can go
out, and they succeed one another without in-
terruption; the slender wound soon heals, a
little gap in the flesh remaining like a scar.
The Indian doubted not to attribute his re-

797 discovery to tiger's fat, which I prescribed for other persons with equal success. You shall now hear a still more singular fact. That rattle which a certain poisonous serpent has annexed to its tail, is a noble medicine: for when reduced to powder, and placed on hollow teeth, it softens them so that they fall out of themselves without any sense of pain. It is also useful in other complaints.

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797 In order to obtain a knowledge of the nature of diseases, and of medicinal herbs, we diligently studied the books of physicians and herbalists; by which means, as we often were of service to the sick, we wrought so far with the Abipones, that whenever they were seized with any disorder they placed all their hopes on our assistance, to the neglect of their jugglers. When I distrusted myself and felt anxious for the life of my patient, I never rashly prescribed any medicine. To defend him from the injuries of the air, and to prevent him from eating or drinking any thing improper in his situation, was my chief care. I afforded him as much wholesome food as I could, from my own provisions. If these regulations were of no avail, I gave him a medicine that had been tried by long use, and which, if it did no good, could at any rate do no harm. The savages, won by our courtesy and kindness, suffered themselves to be baptized;

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES;

261

for at first, whenever they fell sick, the dread of baptism induced them to fly to the lurking-¹²³ holes of the woods, or cause others to carry⁷⁷ them there. During the latter years, almost all of them reposed the greatest confidence in us, and entertained the utmost good-will towards us, and if they remembered our having ever cured them with any medicine; desired to have it given to their hordesmen when they fell ill. From one instance you may judge of others. In the northern parts of Paraguay there grows a nut, called *Piñon del Paraguay* by the Spaniards, and by physicians *nux cathartica*, because it causes both vomiting and purging. It ridiculously deceived the first Spaniards who visited Paraguay. Delighted with its sweetness they eagerly ate this fruit, and to the great amusement of all, found what they had taken for food to be a medicine, which attacks the human body with double arms, and expels noxious or superfluous humours by two ways. We gave three or four of these nuts to the Abipones, for whom we thought purging necessary, and they all received great benefit from the use¹²³ of them. Hence, whenever they felt any¹⁷⁷ weight on their stomachs, they asked us for⁷⁷ this medicine of their own accord. The same was the case with regard to other remedies. The old women, who obstinately adhered to

202

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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123 former customs, raved when they found their
● 797 medicines laughed at, and the fountain of their
[77] gains dried up. The jugglers, who had sucked
the bodies, and drained the property of the
sick, were despised by their countrymen as a
set of worthless drones.

T
753
756 The Patagonians, and other southern savages,
think the body of a sick person to be possessed
of an evil demon. Their physicians carry about
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[534] drums, with horrible forms depicted on them,
which they strike by the sick man's bed, either
to consult the demon concerning the nature of
the disease, or to drive it from the body of their
patient. If any one dies of a disease, the rela-
tions persecute the physician most terribly, as
the author of his death. If a Cacique dies, they
put all the physicians to death, that they may
not fly elsewhere.

T
[766] Actuated by an irrational
T
[763] kind of pity, they bury the dying before they
expire. Father Strobl pulled one man alive
from the grave. The Guaycurus call their phy-
M
756 sicians Nigienigis. A gourd filled with hard
seeds, and a fan of dusky emu feathers are their
chief insignia, and medical instruments, which
they always carry in their hands that they may

C
756 be known. I must not omit to speak of the phy-
sicians of the Chiquitos. A juggler physician,
when he goes to visit the sick, fills his belly
with the most exquisite dainties, chickens, hens;

mentations. What, if we say that many of the Abipones are buried because they are thought dead, but that in reality they die, because they are buried? It is not unlikely that these poor wretches are suffocated, either by the hide with which they are bound, or by the earth which is heaped over them. But as they pull out the heart and tongue of the deceased, it cannot be doubted that they are dead when they are buried; though I strongly suspect that the heart is sometimes cut out when they are half alive, and would perhaps revive were they not prematurely deprived of this necessary instrument of life. The savages, who hasten the burying of their dead so much, presumed to censure us for keeping the Christian Indians out of their graves many hours after their decease.

The Abipones think it a great happiness to be buried in a wood under the shade of trees, and grieve for the fate of those that are interred in a chapel, calling them captives of the Father. In the dread of such sepulture, they at first shunned baptism. They dig a very shallow pit to place the body in, that it may not be pressed by too great a weight of earth heaped over it. They fill the surface of the grave with thorny boughs, to keep off tigers, which delight in carcasses. On the top of the sepul-

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

283

the day. That the lamentations might be carried on without intermission, the jugglers, carrying a spear with a bell at the end of it, visited all the houses to admonish the women at what hours to mourn. The funeral computation, meantime, and the conducting of it as magnificently as was due to the memory of so great a leader, was the sole care of the men—a care admirably calculated to abate the poignancy of their grief; and indeed it would be difficult to decide whether the men drank, or the women mourned most pertinaciously. Whilst this was going on at home, persons of both sexes were chosen to accompany the bones of Ychamenrain to his family burying-place, and there inter them agreeably to the rites of their country. These ceremonies were observed by the savages before they were instructed in the Christian religion only. Other removals of bones were conducted in exactly the same manner, with the exception of the canopy, which was reserved exclusively for their leaders. The bones of seven Abipones, who had been slain by the Spaniards, were brought home on one day, and skilfully constructed into as many images; hats being placed on their skulls, and clothes on their bodies. These seven skeletons were placed in a savage hut, honoured for nine suc-

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752 part of his head, and breaking in being ex-
151 tracted, remained fixed there as firm as a nail.

- [797] At our advice he visited Sta. Fè, to obtain the aid of a surgeon, who found it necessary to make an incision before he could lay hold of the bony arrow point with his forceps. The operation was successfully performed, but not without severe pain, which the Indian bore with the utmost fortitude, not allowing a single expression of pain to escape him; he even exhorted the surgeon, who, unwilling to inflict so much torture, was hesitating in his task, to proceed; "Do you see me shrink?" said he: "fear nothing, I beseech you; cut, pierce, do what ever you like with confidence. I have long been accustomed to pain, wounded as I have so often been with different weapons." At length when the bony point was extracted, such a quantity of blood gushed out, you would have thought an artery had been opened. The Indian beheld this with a calm countenance, and thanked his deliverer in the best terms he was master of.

- 411 Before entering a battle, they lay aside their
726 finest arrows to be employed on the blow which they think of most importance, generally having one of tried virtue in readiness to defend themselves in urgent peril, or to slay some one whose death they particularly desire. When
224 they wish not to kill, but to take alive, birds
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HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES:

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these drinking-parties, as well as the married men.

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You will sooner eradicate from the minds of the Americans any vice belonging to them, than this wicked and pernicious intemperance in drinking. You will sooner persuade them to live content with one wife, to abstain from slaughter and rapine, to scorn their ancient superstitions, or to employ themselves in agriculture and building houses, notwithstanding their aversion to labour. To abolish the custom of drinking-parties is indeed a most arduous work, a labour of many years, and a business to perfect which no eloquence or industry of those whose care and wish it was to convert the savage nations to Christianity, and conform them to the divine laws, was ever equal. At length, however, we have had the satisfaction of beholding this wicked custom of drinking yield to our unwearied toils, and almost all the savages submit to the law of God.

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The first missionaries to visit the *Abipón* were the Jesuit Fathers Juan Fonte and Francisco de Angulo, who in 1591 baptized the children in the bands living near Concepción on the Bermejo River. In 1593 Fathers Alonso de Bárzana and Pedro de Afiasco were sent to convert the *Matard* and the *Guaicuruan* tribes of the same region. Their missionary work lasted only 2 years and produced few results. However, Bárzana found time to write a grammar and a vocabulary of the *Abipón* language. In 1641 Fathers Juan Pastor and Gaspar Arqueyra made a brief sojourn among the *Abipón* of the Bermejo River.

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The example of the *Mocoví* who had accepted Jesuit missionaries facilitated the conclusion of a peace treaty between the Spaniards and some of the *Abipón* bands. In 1748 the Jesuits founded the *Abipón* mission of San Jerónimo, which today is the prosperous city of Reconquista. The mission of Concepción was established in 1749 on the Inespin River and was later transferred to the junction of the Río Dulce with the Río Salado. San Fernando was built in 1750 on the Río Negro at the place of the present city of Resistencia. Timbó, or Rosario, on the Paraguay River (lat. 26°32' S., long. 58°17' W.), was inaugurated in 1763. The missionized *Abipón* were constantly harassed by the *Toba* and *Mocoví*.

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The history of the *Abipón* after the expulsion of the Jesuits is somewhat confused. For many years they waged war against the *Toba* and *Mocoví*, who destroyed the missions of San Fernando and Timbó. In 1770 the *Abipón* of San Jerónimo and some other bands migrated to the eastern side of the Paraná River, at Las Garzas and Goya, to escape the inroads of the *Toba* and *Mocoví*. Some of the *Abipón* who had settled on the left bank of the Paraná River joined bands of marauders who were raiding the farms around Corrientes, Goya, and Vajada. *Abipón* warriors served under the famous leader, Artigas.

Little is known about the fate of the *Abipón* bands who even before the expulsion of the Jesuits had returned to the bush. Some of them tried to settle on their former territory on the Bermejo River, which had been occupied by the *Toba* and *Mocoví*. Bengger (1835, p. 343) speaks of constant skirmishes in which the *Abipón*, *Mocoví*, and *Toba* fought Paraguayan outposts. But, in spite of the continuous warfare along the frontier, the *Abipón* used to visit Asunción to dispose of the cattle stolen in the south. The advance of the military posts in the Chaco during the 19th century restricted their hunting grounds and made life more difficult for them, forcing numerous bands into submission. Many *Abipón* were slaughtered and others were absorbed into the Creole population.

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In 1858 there were still some *Abipón* in a reduction called Sauce, between Santa Fé and Córdoba (Lafone-Quevedo, 1896 d, p. 59). It is not altogether impossible that some more or less pureblooded *Abipón* may still be found in the Chaco santafecino.

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Population of the Abipón.—About 1750 the *Abipón* tribe consisted of three large subgroups: The *Nakaigetergehé* (Forest People), the *Riikahé* (People of the Open Country), and the *Yaaukanigá* (Water People). According to Dobrizhoffer (1784, 2:106), the whole tribe numbered about 5,000. The population decreased rapidly after contact with the Spaniards. In 1767 there were 2,000 *Abipón* distributed in the four Jesuit missions.

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Mocoví (Mocobí, Mosobias, Mogornae, Amókebit, Frentones).—The original home of the *Mocoví* was probably the plains between the upper Bermejo River and the Río Salado, near the *Toba*, their close relatives and frequent allies.

In the 17th century they are frequently listed among the "wild Indians" who roamed along the borders of the Province of Tucumán. At the beginning of the